

Bootlegs — why knock them?

WHY ALWAYS knock the bootleggers only for giving the artists and the public an unfair deal?

Is there really much difference between somebody covering illegally an historical event like the Eric Burdon/Jimi Hendrix concert and Decca releasing old material by the Rolling Stones on LP and maxi-single?

Decca can always state that they are putting out material of historical and discographical importance and hide the fact that they are only making as much money out of their now terminated contract as possible. — THEO SCHLAG, 43 Essen, Hövelsr. 137, W. Germany.

THE CONTEMPTIOUS, bitter attack made by G. Alan (MM June 26) on what he terms "the free thinking sheep" is a typification of what's happening in today's record buying scene. The spirits of The Beatles and Bob Dylan prevail heavily, with their faithful devotees clinging on strongly to what are, by now, fairly old material made by these artists; we all know, and must rightfully admit, that such artistry is both unique and individually original. No one could deny that the impression they have made on every type of popular music is enormous.

Yet the Beatles have split and Bob Dylan has suffered, in G. Alan's words, "the Nashville destruction," there appear to be no unifying factors predominating in a pop world where a sense of unity and direction used to exist.

A large diversification of interest and support has meant the sacrifice of whatever powerful motion once guided pop music. The rebellious understones, however silent they may appear to be, will always exist, as long as Lennon, Zappa and Beefheart are singing. Yet the thrust pop had, has lost its momentum, due, I think, to the loss of the great "superstars."

Is it any wonder, therefore, that we turn hopefully to any

new artists that might possibly reach the first division, and become a superstar?

Time goes flying by, and we must realise that although artists such as Neil Young and Stephen Stills may never reach the standard that Bob Dylan once reached, they are the best 1971 can offer. Similarly, Neil Diamond and Gordon Lightfoot are very good artists, as their albums show. Trying to compare them with Dylan is ridiculous.

As the song says "That was another place and another time." EURO OF WILLIAMS, 39 Alltwen Hill, Pontardawe, Swansea, SA8 3AB.

● LP WINNER.

AT A TIME when there are so many groups playing to themselves it's a breath of fresh air to hear Argent and Skin Alley. Have a decoke now. You know it makes sense. MARTIN HICKMAN, Lake Road, Hamworthy, Poole, Dorset.

I HONESTLY believe that I deserve the free album for reading through your pusillanimous article on bootlegs. The cult of the bootleg stems from the reluctance of record companies to release good material which is of interest to the serious music listener.

Their inability to move their bureaucratic machines in order to release material in demand is almost bound to result in some kind of action.

"One always ought to respect the artist's wishes," says the man from CBS, predictably. One also ought to respect the public's wishes.

Surely the object of worthwhile music is not to present an untrue picture, which would be the result of following the wishes of an artist who wants to keep certain material from the hands of the public. So MM, stop crusading on behalf of record companies. They don't need your help.

But people who have a real interest in all aspects of a particular kind of music do. Otherwise send your writers to some other newspapers, Sunday or otherwise, where they can crusade out of sight on some other triviality. C. J. COWLES, Ash Grove, South Elms Dale, Yorkshire.

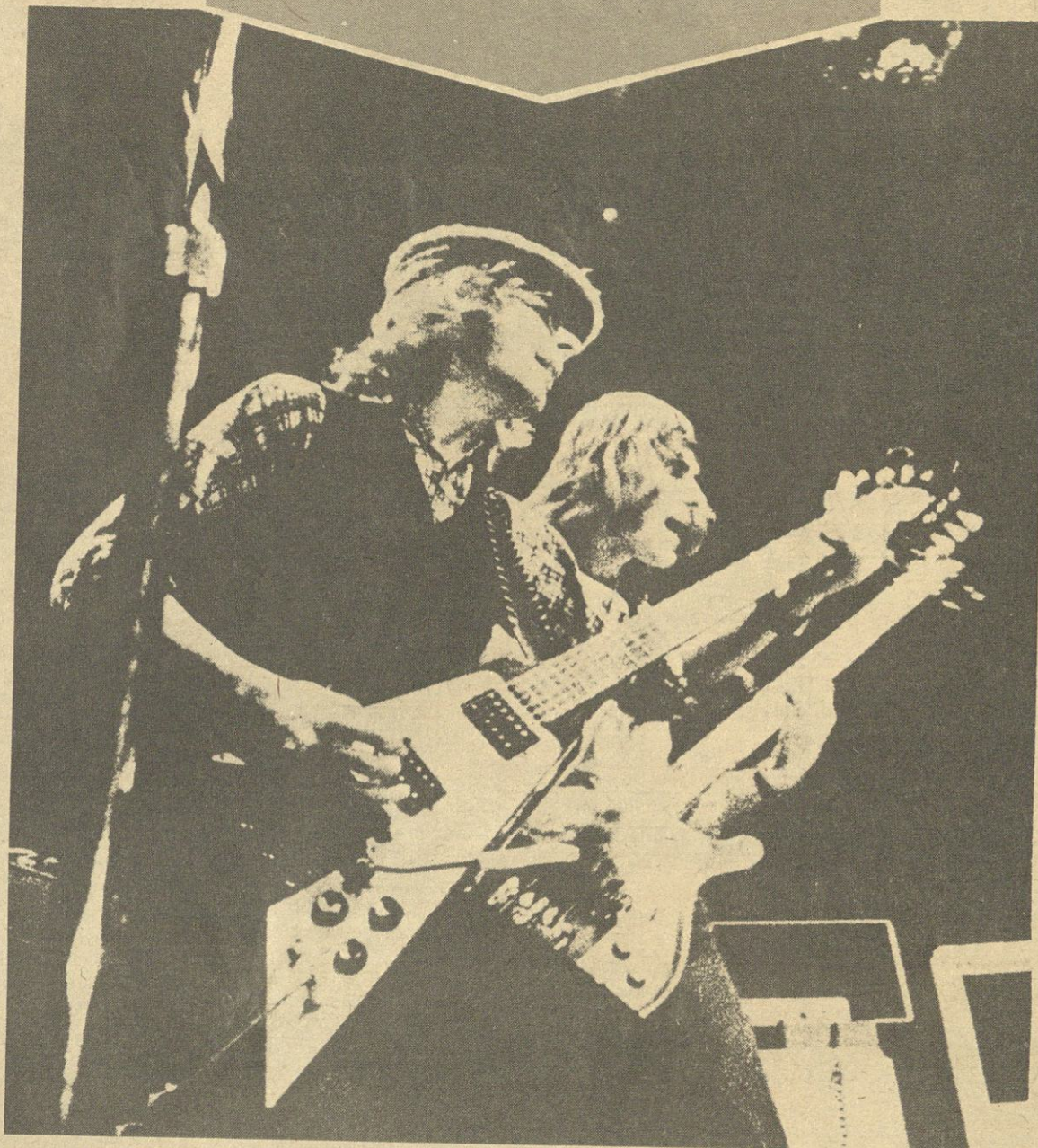
Ban bare breasts

I AM AS broad-minded as the next man, but I was surprised to see bare breasts on the cover of Supertramp's "Indelibly Stamped" album. I was also astounded to see contraceptives on the cover of Birth Control's album.

Are album covers going to get more obscene? If so, something should be done to stop it. Because it is mainly the 'younger generation' who buy these records. — C. ANCELL, 8 Robertson House, Tooting Grove, London, S.W.17.

WISHBONE SMASH

WISHBONE ASH: I've seen this band twice now and they just get better and better. They're going to be big — I'll tell you why: firstly, they've got the feeling for the music, secondly they've got the technical ability, thirdly they've got the compositional flair, and fourthly (and this is the real cruncher point) they've got just that bit of flash that takes a band right to the top: Zeppelin, The Stones and a handful of others have got it. Know what I mean? Just watch them go. — NICK MYERS, 15 Shepley Drive, Hazel Grove, Stockport.



JUST WHO-HA?

THE MELODY Maker dated October 24, 1970, proclaimed "Who lead Big Blitz on Singles."

It was stated that before Christmas, an EP of four completely new songs by the Who would be available at the price of a normal single.

This was, explained Pete Townshend, "Because the mood of the group has always been to keep record prices down to a rational level" and that "the price of singles is ridiculous, it costs nothing to produce a single."

Then why, on why, eight months later, do we get just an ordinary two-track single, the "B" side being one of the tracks we were promised on the EP? What on earth has happened to Pete Townshend's high morals — and the EP? — N. K. HOLT, 44 Balfour Road, Southport, Lancs.

● LP WINNER

I WOULD like to make three recommendations concerning three "pop" records and the artists who recorded them. Firstly, that Johnny Johnson

and the Bandwagon should be lined up against the nearest wall and shot for their desecration of "Mr Tambourine Man," secondly that Dave and Ansil Collins should be locked away for a long period of time and released only on condition that they refrain from making any more positively nauseating records like "Double Barrel," and lastly that Middle of the Road should hurry up and find their Mama and their Papa and then stay with them and stop boring us all to tears with their meaningless drivel. BRIAN G. MOSES, 44 Finsbury Road, Ramsgate, Kent.

CONGRATULATIONS, Procol Harum, for a truly brilliant album in the shape of "Broken Barricades." Everything from the sleeve design through to the lyrics and music itself is perfect. — MARY MORLEY, 13 Brean Down Avenue, Weston-Super-Mare, Somerset.

I'D LIKE TO thank Chris Simpson, Magna Carta, John Dankworth and the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra for the most rewarding concert

hour I've experienced this year. Chris Simpson's "Seasons" is tremendous: it's warm, musically, swinging, the lot. When's the next performance? — STEVE RACE, Wembley Park, Middlesex.

THE READING FESTIVAL was presented by the Marquee and the National Jazz Federation. But why were there no jazz musicians? Why no Humph, Dankworth, Scott, Barry Martyn, Colyer? — RAYMOND BRAY, Wrangle House, Wrangle, Boston, Lincs.

NOW THAT FREE have broken up, I can see no other group to fill their place. For me, Free's music was in a class of its own. They had that little something that no other groups seem to possess. After hearing them live in Croydon I don't think that I could ever forget them. Who could? After seeing Paul Rodgers leaping energetically around the stage and Andy Fraser's out of this world guitar-playing. Still, all us Free fans can only hope that the new groups formed from the still warm ashes of Free will be as good as the original band, and I look forward to hearing the much talked about new Andy Fraser band. D. LEGON, Morton Gardens, Wallington, Surrey.

MAILBAG

Write to Melody Maker, 161 Fleet Street, London, EC4P 4AA. You could win your favourite album.

Guv'nor Ken ain't buried yet

JOHN ROBERTS in his article "Guv'nor Bill," (MM June 19) was a little premature in writing off our present Guv'nor, Ken Colyer.

While Ken has certainly retired from the daily grind of leading an international touring band his potential as the prophet of New Orleans Jazz is enhanced.

Since the end of May I have witnessed his guest appearances with Ray Smith's Rhythm Kings, The New Iberia Stompers and Cuff Billet's Solent City Jazzmen.

In each case his exciting cornet lead has catalysed these bands into playing superb jazz as well as entralling the listeners. This is only a start, in the months ahead Ken will deliver the message to many other musicians willing to listen and learn. — JOHN D. LONG, 3 Nightingale Drive, West Ewell, Epsom, Surrey.

KEITH REID probably had twins when he read Mark Plummer's incredible one-word definition of his lyrics, and fellow-sufferer Gary Brooker must also have given birth (to four-letter words and thoughts of poison-pen letters), as his beautiful arrangements on "Broken Barricades" can never, by any stretch of a musical imagination, be termed "funky" (Ugh!).

Perhaps Robin Trower's composition "Poor Mohammed" comes very remotely near that over-hyped cliché, but please, don't insult Procol's few British devotees, as well as misleading your readers, by heralding their music with a term more applicable to soul or reggae! — A. BAGLEY, 19 Woodland Rise, Welwyn Garden City.

We're the greatest

BRITAIN LEADS the world of rock. We have the hard rock band; Zeppelin, blues band — Groundhogs; jazz band — Softs; folk band — Fairport; and avant garde band — the Floyd. The list is quite endless.

The only good thing from across the pond has been the blues and the Groundhogs, even under their "progressive" tag play blues with more feeling than any American bands (e.g. "Still A Fool") with perhaps the exception of Hooker n' Heat, and who was Hooker the leader of? Yes, you guessed, John Lee Hooker and the Groundhogs, the best ever British true delta blues band.

Come on people—give English bands work, not American record companies — G. S. NORWOOD, 37 Kayner Towers, Albany Road, Leyton, London, E.10.

It's just not good enough, ELP

I HAVE given ELP's "Tarkus" LP five very fair hearings and I must say that I am more than disappointed in it.

The "Tarkus" suite has touches of genius and brilliance in the writing but is ruined by sloppy playing and an indifferent attitude which shows through in parts i.e. Lake's off-key singing in "Stones of Years". Lake's

poor electric-guitar playing which destroys the majestic atmosphere of "Battlefield" and Emerson's mediocre playing on several pieces such as "Infinite Space".

Carl Palmer must surely be the hero of the set. His playing is wonderful throughout.

Greg Lake has come up with some good ideas in words and music on this album but his singing is poor.

tastic acoustic guitar playing?

Keith Emerson has deteriorated the most. There are no piano solos of any standing, just fill-in rubbish, such as "Jeremy Bender" and "Are You Ready Eddy?"

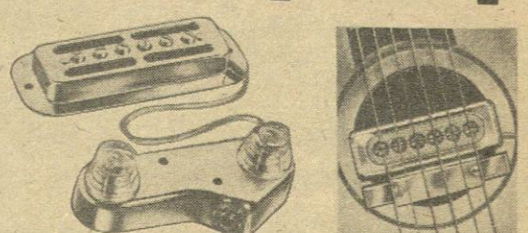
ELP fans — don't accept anything from them. It'll destroy them like it did the Beatles. — STEW SELKIRK, 136 Colston Street, New

COME ON EMERSON, who are you trying to kid with ELP? What has happened to that flag-burning man of the 'America' days?

Answer: he is trying to kid everyone as a member of a second-rate trio who produce boring music (?) like "Tarkus", which is only a con-

Emerson has lost his fire since the brilliant days of the Nice; remember the brilliant original "Rondo" or the inventive "For Example"? Now compare those with "Knife Edge" or "Ready Eddy" — impossible, they just don't belong to the same category. The simple truth is Emerson has gone stale. — NICHOLAS HAWARD, 22

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